

EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

TRAIN TRACKS



Volume 11, Issue 2

WINTER 2010

CALENDAR

All events are held at the Easton Historical Society unless otherwise noted. In case of bad weather, please call to confirm the event is still being held!

Thursday, December 2nd, Hanukkah Begins.

*Holiday Open House
Schedule—Saturday, December 4th, 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. with the Easton Garden Club greens sale and Sunday, December 5th, 1-5 P.M. Pick up your new 2010 ornament or other great gifts, or a treat from our bake sale!*

Sunday, December 12th, Open House, 1-5 P.M. Last open house of the year. Still time to get your shopping done! Raffle winner drawn!

Tuesday, December 21st, Happy 185th Birthday, Easton!

Saturday, December 25th, Merry Christmas!

Saturday, January 1st, 2011 Happy New Year!

Sunday, January 9th, Open House, Noon-5 P.M. —National History Day projects on display! In the event of bad weather we will hold this open house on Sunday, January 16th or the 23rd. Watch the local paper for details!

Coming soon...

Watch for the next Chowder and Chatter evening on March 31st at Southeastern Regional as the guests of Lee and Kevin Williams! Thank you, Lee and Kevin!

The mission of the Easton Historical Society is to preserve, promote and interpret the unique industrial, social, cultural, architectural and environmental history of the Town.

Holiday Happenings

Holiday greetings to all our members and friends! A special season is upon us, and we have some special holiday treats for you! Take a look at the offerings below:

- We are raffling off an original 1855 map of Easton! Details and a ticket order form are inside.
- Our newest holiday ornament featuring the 1895 Oliver Ames High School on Lincoln Street will be available.
- Our newest publication, Reminiscences, is now available.
- Our excellent bakers will be providing their confectionary best for our bake sale on Saturday, December 4th.
- We have lots of great gift ideas in all price ranges!
- The Easton Garden Club will hold their annual holiday greens sale at the Society on Saturday, December 4th.
- Lots of hot coffee and goodies will warm your body while you enjoy great company and conversation!
- Spend some time downtown at the annual Easton Lions Club Holiday Festival. Always a good time with lots of entertainment and activities! Watch the annual lighting of the Rockery!

We will be open on Saturday, December 4th from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M., and on Sunday the 5th from 1-5 P.M.

Our last open house for 2010 will be held on Sunday, December 12th from 1-5 P.M. Need a break from the rush? Drop in!

If you still need to find some great last minute gifts, call the Society at 508-238-7774 right up to December 24th for assistance!

*The Easton Historical Society Newsletter "Train Tracks" is published quarterly by the Easton Historical Society.
Officers: President—Deborah MacPhee, 1st Vice President—Kenneth J. Michel, 2nd Vice President—Edmund C. Hands
Treasurer—Nancy DeLuca, Recording / Corresponding Secretary—Hazel L. Varella
Directors—David Ames, Jr., Patricia Baker, James MacPhee, Debra Salisbury, Robert J. Wooster
Curator—Frank T. Meninno*

The Station Master -President Deborah MacPhee

Many Thanks to the Society Volunteers

The Society is rich with volunteers! Over the years, there have been many people who have donated their time to the Society. They are the people you see at Society events or at the monthly open houses. They are behind the scenes sorting and organizing the collections of the Society. I would like to thank all of the people who volunteer at the Society in many different ways. It would be impossible to include everyone who has helped out in the past. However, to give you a glimpse of the volunteer activity here at the Society, I would like to mention those who have volunteered in the last couple of months.

The Board of Directors are all volunteers. They meet monthly and assist at a variety of Society events throughout the year. These are the people who create all of the wonderful Society events! The Board of Directors consists of Deborah MacPhee, Kenneth Michel, Edmund Hands, Hazel Varella, Patricia Baker, David Ames, Jr., Nancy DeLuca, James MacPhee, Debra Salisbury, and Robert Wooster. The meetings are also attended by Frank T. Meninno, the Society's Curator.

The Research Committee gathers at the Station on Wednesday mornings. They sort and organize the many artifacts and collections of the Society. The committee consists of the following volunteers: Barbara A. Beech, Edmund C. Hands, Frances L. Holland, Judge Leon J. Lombardi, Frank T. Meninno, Maureen Raymo, Judith B. Sabin, Jean W. Visnauskis, and Hazel L. Varella.

Over the years, the Research Committee has come upon some interesting articles about Easton's past. Using some of these interesting articles from the Society archives, Hazel L. Varella and Dan Paré created the Society's newest book, *Reminiscences*. Dan Paré prepared all the materials for the publication and also edited what was appropriate. The book has received rave reviews!

During the Halloween season, the Society held two Spooky Hayrides. The hayrides were hosted by Nancy DeLuca, Joanne Edwards, and Frank Meninno. Edmund Hands was the narrator for the rides. The hayrides were a big success and enjoyed by many!

Just recently, the annual Train Day event was held at the Society. The event was hosted by Nancy DeLuca, Debi MacPhee, Frank Meninno, and Hazel Varella. We were delighted to have Christina Watson and Julia Mudd volunteer for the day. They made a fruit punch and baked some wonderful refreshments for the event. They both assisted at the children's activities table. The event was enjoyed adults and children of all ages.

The Society is lucky to have a couple of people who have volunteered for many different events. The two volunteers are Candice Sheehan and Gillian Sheehan. If they are not assisting at an event, they are helping Frank Meninno around the Station. Just recently they helped at the NRT Harvest Fair and also at the annual Yard Sale held at the Station. Their brother, Brett Sheehan also occasionally volunteers.

Anne-Marie Meninno has offered her assistance for many Society events. She recently manned the booth at the NRT Fair and also assisted in the setup of Train Day. Anne-Marie is responsible for creating all of the beautiful raffle baskets throughout the year.

The Easton Historical Society is privileged to have such dedicated people to volunteer for the Society events. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered at the Society. There many volunteer opportunities at the Society. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the Society.

Curator's Corner - Curator / Caretaker Frank T. Meninno

I have seen a great many brownies lately... make that Brownies, and Junior Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts too! Over the past few weeks I have had the privilege of sharing Easton's history with these wonderful children. They are always eager to learn, and boy are they ever full of questions! As soon as they enter the building, one of the children will begin to ask why the waiting room doors say "men" or "women", leading to a discussion on old time customs. From there, anything goes! I usually pick out several items to pass around. The most popular of these is one of the small Revolutionary War cannon balls made in Easton. Another popular activity is to have the children "model" old items of clothing. These are great items from our past that they can touch, which makes it all very real.

One of the things that is important is to tell the kids something about the part of town they live in. I show them photos from around Easton, beginning with the former Dean mill which gives me the chance to talk about South Easton and Eastondale being the oldest settled part of town. From there we discuss Simpson Spring and the Morse car. The Ames family and their contributions to Easton's and America's history are discussed. When we get to Furnace Village, I show a photo of a trolley car going through the Five Corners. No one ever guesses the location of that photo since so much has changed. Boy are the kids (and parents) surprised to find out what great history we have here. Hopefully they will leave with a new appreciation for their town and their neighborhood!

HOLIDAY RAFFLE—1855 MAP OF EASTON!

An anonymous donor has given a very special item for our holiday raffle—an original 1855 colored map of the Town of Easton! This wonderful map is the first of the maps produced for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Bristol County Atlas sets (the others were done on 1872 and 1895). It is a rare item and is in very good condition. The map size is 36" x 27". It is mounted on a heavy canvas backing, and can be either hung by its original wood hangers or framed.

The 1855 map is one of the earliest maps to denote the locations of houses in town along with the names of the owners. Also listed on the map are the locations of public buildings such as school houses and cemeteries. The school districts are also outlined, and sections of the map are hand colored. A detail of the North Easton village is included in the lower left hand corner. You will be surprised at the detail included on the map. We do not know how many of these maps were produced, but to see a map of this age in this condition is a real treat. There is some age-related cracking but the map is intact.

You have an opportunity to win this map. Tickets for this very rare item are priced at \$5.00 each, or 3 for \$10.00. The donor has asked that the proceeds be divided evenly between the Easton Historical Society and the Ames Free Library—Easton's Public Library. We are happy to be a part of this great opportunity, and express our gratitude to the donor for the generosity shown to us.

To order your raffle ticket(s), please use the form on the back cover. Anyone who sends in a check by mail will receive an acknowledgment. The drawing will be held on Sunday, December 12th at 4 P.M. at the Society. The winner will be notified by phone. If you do not live locally we will be happy to ship it to you via the United States Postal Service. Good luck winning this fantastic possession!



OLD HOUSES and BUILDINGS of EASTON

Dean Mill, c. 1750—2010

A sad event took place this past October when South Easton lost a most venerable landmark: the former J. O. Dean Mill. Although efforts were made to save the building by relocating it to another spot on the property, the deal to save it fell victim to the failure to obtain necessary zoning variances on the property. Easton had allocated money from the Community Preservation Act to purchase preservation restrictions on the mill, but was unable to consummate the deal. The site at the corner of Washington and Depot Streets is now void of any structure for the first time in over 300 years.

Clement Briggs built a grain mill around 1700, just about on the same site as the Dean Mill. It stood next to the saw mill erected before 1700 by the Randalls. After Briggs's death, the mill was sold to Timothy Cooper in February 1723. By 1729 Ephraim Randall owned it, and after that, his son Timothy Randall took ownership. The old mill was razed and a new one built in 1750, by Robert Ripley who was a carpenter. In 1803 the mill passed into the partnership formed by Ichabod Macomber and Cyrus Alger.

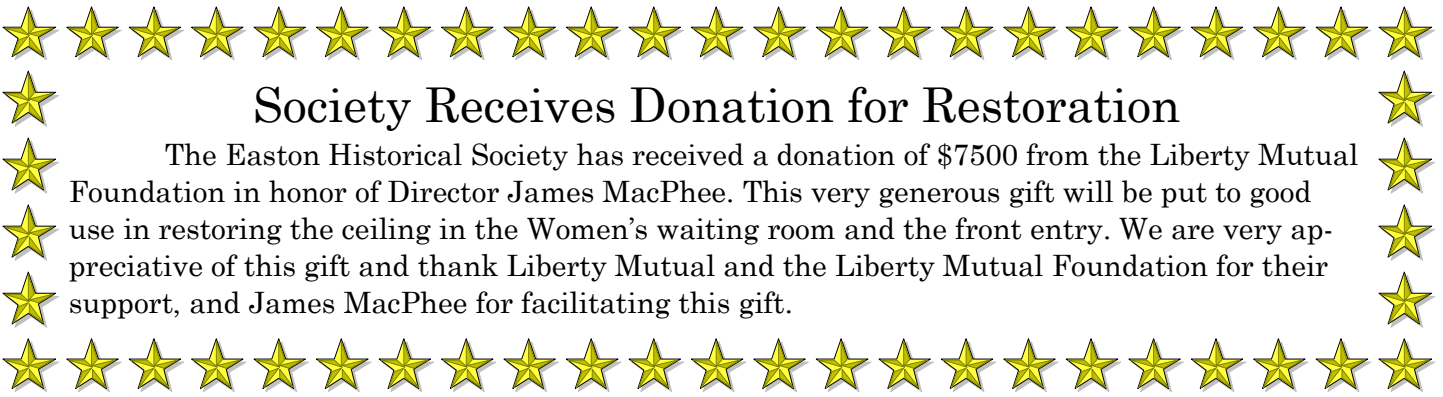
After a lawsuit over water privileges was settled, the property was owned by Josiah Copeland, Bezer Keith, Calvin Brett and James Guild. Later it was again sold to Joseph Hayward, Roland Howard, Josiah Copeland and Elijah Howard, Jr., and was operated under the name of Elijah Howard and Co. A small forge was erected on the dam next to the mill, but proved unsuccessful. That building later housed the Ross Heel Company. In 1840 Barzillai Dean purchased the mill. After his death it passed to his son Thomas H. Dean and then to his brother John O. Dean. It stayed in the Dean and Howard family until the 1980's. In recent years it was run as a small garden and landscape center.

The grain business was a good one. In 1872 Lucian Bonney was hired to build a large addition on the north side of the mill. In 1900 another addition was built ten feet wide, and was added to the south side of the building, and the third floor was added. This work was done by Joseph Baldwin. An elevator was also installed at that time.

The current owners of the property had plans to move the mill off the dam and use it for office space. Instead a car wash will occupy the corner near Washington and Depot Streets. Unfortunately the plans to save the building fell apart, and Easton lost its oldest surviving mill and the last direct connection to our first settlers.

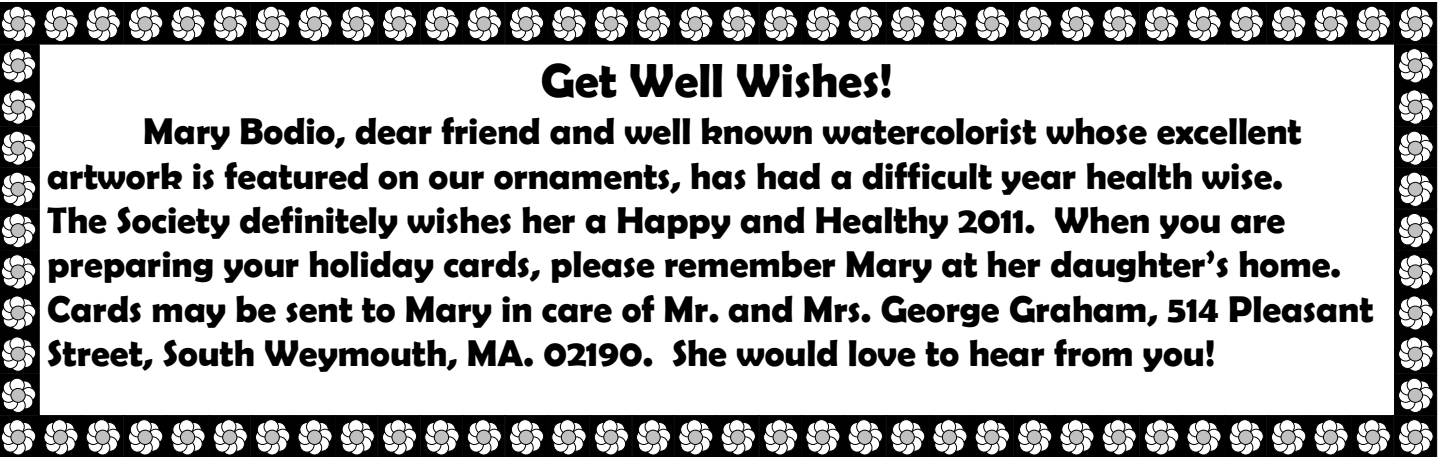
The South Easton mill privilege as it looked circa 1910. The former J. O. Dean Mill is on the right; the buildings at the left and center once housed an iron forge, the Thomas Dean Machine Shop, the F. H. White Machine Company, the Ross Heel Company and the Purington Automatic Window Shade Company.

This is the third in a series on the old houses or buildings of Easton. Information for this article was taken from research done by Heman Howard in the early 1930's.



Society Receives Donation for Restoration

The Easton Historical Society has received a donation of \$7500 from the Liberty Mutual Foundation in honor of Director James MacPhee. This very generous gift will be put to good use in restoring the ceiling in the Women’s waiting room and the front entry. We are very appreciative of this gift and thank Liberty Mutual and the Liberty Mutual Foundation for their support, and James MacPhee for facilitating this gift.



Get Well Wishes!

Mary Bodio, dear friend and well known watercolorist whose excellent artwork is featured on our ornaments, has had a difficult year health wise. The Society definitely wishes her a Happy and Healthy 2011. When you are preparing your holiday cards, please remember Mary at her daughter’s home. Cards may be sent to Mary in care of Mr. and Mrs. George Graham, 514 Pleasant Street, South Weymouth, MA. 02190. She would love to hear from you!



Friends Group Receives Special Award

Preservation Massachusetts has awarded their very first “Community Spirit” award to the members of the “Friends of the Historic Ames Shovel Works in North Easton”. The award “recognizes the hard work, dedication and commitment of local groups to preservation within our communities”, Preservation Massachusetts said.

The Friends group was formed in October 2008 when developers threatened to demolish the former Ames Shovel Shop complex. The group of many people, led by president David Ames, Jr., William, Fred and Oliver Ames, along with treasurer Lee Williams, worked with architects and consultants to develop a workable plan to reuse the site in an historically sensitive manner. Much of this plan is being utilized by Beacon Communities Development in their current plans to convert the factories to housing while preserving the historic integrity of the site and the surrounding neighborhood. David Ames recognized the efforts of the many people who were involved. “It’s an award that belongs to a lot of people”, he stated. “We’re obviously very pleased.”

Preservation Massachusetts, best known for their annual list of “America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places”, included the Ames site in their 2009 list.

The Easton Historical Society extends congratulations to the Friends for receiving this extraordinary and well deserved recognition!



RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Slides of ice cutting at Monte's Ice House, 2 postcards of the Carr home and store on Washington Street (later Crossroads Café, now Doyle's Pub), from Diane Carr; 1976 Raynham Bi-centennial book with story about Toby Gilmore and the Leonard's iron works, from Richard Hill; newspapers with accounts of the deaths of Presidents Roosevelt and Kennedy, President Ford swearing in, Apollo missions, 1935 Christmas Card addressed to scout Clifford Grant, Harmony Grange ribbon, 1894 Sunday School cards, Union School photo, photo of members of the Irving and Gardener families, photo of O.A.H.S. class of 1902, from Eleanor Grant; H. M. Pool level from Burt Lewis; 2 shoe lasts and a shoe from Madelyn Willis; many class photos from Center School, Simpson Spring bottles, School Committee Reports, Eastoners, laminated pages of the Brockton Enterprise, from Russ Meninno; Central Methodist Church Cookbook, 1951, from Florence Howard; anniversary plate of the Evangelical Congregational Church, from Francis Meninno; 2 Old Colony Railroad stock certificates, Easton Branch Railroad stock certificate, 1931 Fish and Game Laws, 1929 Ames Shovel Company billheads, 1917 Ames price list, newsclippings about the Society, from Emily Neary and Jim Duggan; program—Boston Patriots vs. Huskies Basketball Game, 1960, with team signatures, from Buddy Wooster; key tag for Langwater Dairy corn crib, penciled in along with the name Mrs. Oliver Ames, from Mr. and Mrs. David Jacobsen; Ames shovel, from a friend by way of Judy King; WWI items from the estate of Ragnar Gustaf Peterson—Army pins, dog tags, photos of him in France, Red Cross sack, two pairs of riding gloves including one pair with inked caricatures of he and his wife, Easton Victory Medal, window service flag, wallet with personal papers, army leave slips, genealogy information, from Diane Peterson; railroad spike found near Ames monument in Wyoming, Elect Kippy Grant Selectman pin, circa 1970, 1853 tax receipts, anonymous donor; newspapers including stories on Roger Maris' 61st homerun, death of Gary Cooper, JFK inauguration, memorial albums of JFK's speeches and other items, from R. Wayne Legge; pair of children's boxing gloves given to Tom De Witt by Rocky Marciano, through Dorothy (Hatchfield) Diauto, circa 1960, from Tom De Witt; many items from the O.A.H.S. Class of 1960 including the 50th reunion mug, 7th grade class photo and names in a frame, graduation and baccalaureate programs, Jr. / Sr. Prom napkin, 1936 Eastoner, 1936 diploma holder, Lowndes—Morse Insurance advertising flyswatter, Vose and Sons sliding calculator, billheads from Easton companies, other Easton related booklets and items, from Richard and Linda (Rohdin) Beal; O.A.H.S. football jacket, 1996, from Neill Anderson, Class of 1999; memorabilia from the O.A.H.S. Class of 1935 including reunion photos and slides, from John Rusilko; early Easton postcards, from Lela Melendy Pierce; 9 discs of Easton cable programs prepared in the mid-1990's by Jean Churchill, Ken Jackson, Dr. Robert Misiewicz, and David Andrews, a number of yard sale items, from Dr. Misiewicz; financial donations from Virginia Carr Dench, and from Christina and Nicholas Watson; an antique fire extinguisher marked "Easton Fire Department, a 1938 Hurricane souvenir book, a 1905 Sears catalog, from Richard and Linda Beal; a school savings book from Ron Somerville.

We also want to thank David Anderson Electric Co. Inc. for their donation of electrical work that has much improved our building.

The Easton Historical Society is grateful for the continued generosity of the donors of these and other historical items to our collections.

Special thanks goes out to our fall speakers: Kenneth Gloss at the Ames Free Library—Easton's Public Library on September 27th and Gerald Beals at the North Easton Savings Bank's corporate headquarters on November 8th. Both presentations were fascinating. Many thanks to the Library and Bank for hosting these two events!

Our October 23rd Spooky Hayrides were sold out! Thanks to our storyteller Ed Hands, Nancy De Luca and Joanne Edwards for helping with the hot chocolate, and to Todd Wilbur and Clover Valley Farm for a great ride!

We also extend our appreciation to Ken Martin, who held three bottle and can drives for us this year. Our most recent drive realized a contribution of \$120! Ken began this project back in 1987 and has raised more than \$12,000 for the Society!

On a sad note, Paula Shea, a retired Easton educator, died August 23rd. Mrs. Shea had been in charge of the Society's Memorial Book for many years. Listed in this book were the donors who made memorial contributions to honor deceased members. Her excellent calligraphy talent was utilized to keep this memorial record special. We offer our deepest expression of sympathy to her husband Melvin and her family.

EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BAKE SALE

Attention all bakers! As part of our holiday festivities we will be holding a bake sale during the weekend of December 4th-5th. We know that we are blessed with many excellent cooks, and ask that you would consider providing us with some tastefully tempting tarts, cakes, breads or pies for our sale. Maybe you have your own holiday specialty, that special sweet that is only made this time of year. Why not make an extra one for the Society? Items may be dropped off on Friday, December 3rd before 5 P.M., or the morning of the sale. If you can bake, but can't deliver, please call 508-238-7774 for pickup to be arranged. The Society appreciates your time, talents and goodies!

My Brother's Keeper Christmas Collection Drive

Can you imagine yourself not getting a gift this holiday season? Sadly many children may be in that very circumstance. To help out, the Easton Historical Society will be collecting donations of new toys for the Christmas Collection Drive for My Brother's Keeper. My Brother's Keeper is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping area families. Last year, over 2000 families, 5000 children and 3000 adults from all backgrounds were the recipients of help from this wonderful organization. We will be collecting new toys of any type during December. You can bring toys to our open houses, or drop them off any time. Call ahead to make sure someone will be at the Society. Frank Meninno will gladly pick up gifts as well. You do not have to wrap the toys. Imagine the joy you could bring to some child when he or she opens their gift! For more information go to www.mybrotherskeeper.org.

Gift Ideas!

Your Society has some great gift ideas. The following are a few examples:

Gifts \$20 and under: Shoveltown Tee Shirts, Dewter Ames Shovel Paperweights, two volume set of the History of Easton.

Gifts \$10 and under: Most publications, our new book Reminiscences, our new Holiday Ornament featuring the 1895 Oliver Ames High School building, Dewter Ames Shovel Ornaments, Orchids at Christmas, Volume 1 of the History of Easton.

Gifts \$5 and under: Postcards, Easton magnets, train whistles, bookmarks, Growing Up at Sheep Pasture, Ames Family of Easton, Volume 2 of the History of Easton.

You might consider the gift of a Society membership, or a gift certificate good for items in our Society shop.

Copies of our new book Reminiscences and other books may be mailed to you. Please add \$2.50 to cover the cost of postage on each item. For larger orders, please call or email us for the cost!

1855 Easton Map Raffle

To purchase raffle tickets, use this form. You will not receive a ticket back in the mail, but your name will be placed on the quantity of tickets you purchase. Please make your check payable to "Easton Historical Society" and send it to: Easton Historical Society, P.O. Box 3, North Easton, MA 02356. All requests received by Saturday, December 11th will be included in the drawing. Late arrivals will be returned. Thank you and good luck!

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

State _____ ZIP _____

of tickets _____ X \$5.00 = \$ _____

of tickets at 3 for \$10.00 = \$ _____

Total enclosed \$ _____

Address changing? Please tell us!

Address Service Requested

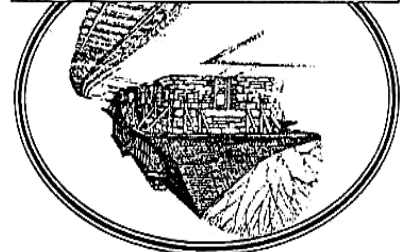
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